The Effectiveness of TikTok as an Instructional Media on Students' English Vocabulary Mastery

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ABSTRACT

Being the foundation block of a language, vocabulary mastery remains an interesting topic to be studied. Constant advancement in technology and shifts in pedagogy have warranted continuous updates in the understanding of vocabulary and vocabulary mastery. The present study aims to investigate the effect of TikTok on students' English vocabulary mastery. Using a quasi-experimental research design the present study compared the vocabulary mastery of two groups of students grouped into experimental and control groups with 34 students in each group. The experimental group was taught using TikTok and the control group was taught using conventional method. Multiple choice tests were used for pre-test and post-test. The resulting mean scores of both groups were compared and analyzed using T-test. Based on the statistical calculation with the significance level a = 0.05, it showed that t (66) = 3.749, p = <. The findings of the research indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in students' English vocabulary mastery between students who were taught using TikTok and students who were taught using conventional method. It implies that TikTok is effective to be used as an instructional media to teach English vocabulary.

Keywords: vocabulary mastery, TikTok, instructional media, effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a crucial part in foreign language learning. Without having adequate vocabulary mastery, English learners cannot comprehend written texts; nor can they convey communication, express their ideas, thoughts, and emotions (Abrar et al., 2013; Heriyanto, 2015). Even though language learners have good command of grammar, it will be useless if they still have very limited vocabulary knowledge, (Rohmatillah, 2014). Richards & Schmidt stated that vocabulary is the foundation for how well learners can understand a language in writing speaking, listening, and reading (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

In fact, language learners consider that learning and mastering English vocabulary is one of the complicated parts (Derakhshan & Khatir, 2015). Liu (2016) found out that the most language learners perceive that the activity of vocabulary learning is not easy, and many of them have trouble in memorizing large amounts of vocabulary or applying it appropriately (Liu, 2016). Moreover, Yasin & Sitiha (2021) also discovered that some students were lazy to memorize vocabularies because the students thought that memorizing vocabulary was a

challenging and boring activity, since it was just conducted in a monotone way (Yasin & La Sitiha, 2021). Rahman & Angraeni (2020) detected that in Indonesia, the chance of failing in mastering and understanding the vocabulary was higher, it is also faced by non-English speaking countries because the students who learn vocabularies only take place during the English lessons. The results were proved that learners have a very limited time to obtain and to practice the new terms vocabulary that they have learnt in the meaningful context (Rahman & Angraeni, 2020). Furthermore, based on the researcher preliminary study conducted in MIPA 6 and MIPA 7 classes, the researcher found that students' English vocabulary mastery in said two classes were still low. It is known after the researcher gave the students test to do speaking and writing, the researcher found that students still get petrified in speaking and produce limited sentences in writing. It is also supported by the result of the interview with some students that they felt difficult to learn and memorize new English vocabulary. Besides, the teacher who teach English in those two classes also confirmed that the students in MIPA 6 and MIPA 7 are truly lack of English vocabulary. Thus, this condition is rather impossible to eliminate and ignored, yet modifying or discovering teaching techniques and media is very necessary which may assist students in mastering the English vocabulary (Suherdi, 2009). Naz (2018) believes that media plays a substantial role during the activity of teaching and learning process. He further explained that the instructional-aids is able to assist teachers to deliver the knowledge in a prepossessing way and giving diversity of environment and atmosphere in classroom, and make teaching learning process to be more effective and attractive (Naz, 2018). Therefore, the teachers should be able to discover and use attractive media which can be utilized to assist the students in memorizing English vocabulary.

It is known that several media such as visual aids, printed media, and audio media can be utilized effectively as an instructional media by the teachers to teach the vocabulary. However, it is undeniable that the use of monotonous media and ways may cause the students to be bored and no longer interested in the process of learning activity. As stated by Yasin & Sitiha (2021), the students will feel bored and lazy to learn since the students are taught in monotonous ways by the teacher. Thus, it is important to find out another effective media which can be utilized by the teacher to help students to be interested and motivated in learning English vocabulary (Yasin & La Sitiha, 2021).

There are abundant of media that can be operated by the teachers in learning English vocabulary. Due to advancement of technology, the social media recently has been considered as an effective tool to supplement the teaching activity (Heriyanto, 2015). As explained by Richards & Schmidt (2013) who say that several studies have shown evidences of social media has become a favorable learning media for learning the language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). Thus, utilizing the contents in social media application can be considered such a good innovation to maximize the utilization of technology in learning foreign language.

The most frequently used social media application is TikTok (Jaffar et al., 2019). TikTok is an application network on a video platform that has numerous music support which may enable its users to perform their performance or videos with dance, freestyle, and much more that encourages the creativity of its users (Khlaif, 2021). It was introduced by Zhang Yiming in 2016 and owned by Byte Dance. This application used to be named Douyin which was very popular in China. Due to its popularity, Douyin has expanded to various countries with a new name, namely TikTok. In 2017 TikTok also came to Indonesia (Pratiwi et al 2021). Just like in other countries, this social media application also attracts a lot of attention from

various groups to create creative videos and contents (Khlaif, 2021). Based on statistics, TikTok ranked seventh from top 10 applications by all the times downloaded worldwide from 2019 and ranked second for applications downloaded worldwide in Google play store and Apple store in 2019 (Huining, 2020).

The familiarity of TikTok, has triggered several researchers to conduct research toward the utilization of English contents in TikTok in learning English. They discovered that TikTok was able to support the students in learning English speaking, pronunciation, writing skills and vocabulary (Pratiwi et.al., 2021; Hadi & Indriani, 2021; Nabilah et al., 2021; Salsabia et al., 2021; Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022; Sinta et al., 2022; Fahdin, 2020). A research that was conducted by Salsabia et al (2021), find out that TikTok could make students entertained and not easily felt bored during learning and teaching activity, it could improve students' English speaking competency as well. Hadi & Indriani (2021) in their stated that using the contents of TikTok as a media for students' speaking was able to increase students' self-confidence to speak English and could add new experiences for students in expressing and delivery their ideas, thoughts and emotions for free on TikTok. Pratiwi (2021) discovered that TikTok application was able to improve students' pronunciation and it could be used as a media for learning English pronunciation. Fahdin (2020) explained that students' perception toward the use of TikTok was positive. He further found out that short videos on TikTok that containing English material and contents could help them to expand and develop their English vocabularies (Fahdin, 2020). It is also supported by Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022; Sinta et al. (2022) which find out that TikTok could give positive impact and it was very helpful for the students to use in memorizing adjective vocabulary. Moreover, Hadi & Indriani (2021) discovered that the contents in TikTok application was able to make teacher and students easier to get information, students also interested and enjoyed to learn because they have new experiences in learning English in an unconventional way. It means the English short video contents in TikTok application as an instructional media can provide opportunity for students to expand their vocabulary mastery.

TikTok's unique features significantly contribute to enhancing students' vocabulary mastery by providing an engaging and interactive learning environment. One of the primary features is the platform's short-form video content, which keeps students engaged with concise and visually appealing material. This format aligns with modern students' preferences for quick, digestible content, facilitating easier retention and recall of new vocabulary (Rahman, 2021). Additionally, TikTok's algorithm, which curates content based on users' interests and previous interactions, ensures that students are frequently exposed to relevant vocabulary in contexts that interest them, thereby reinforcing learning (Rama et al., 2023). The interactive nature of TikTok, allowing users to create, share, and comment on videos, also plays a crucial role. This interactivity not only motivates students to use new words in their own content but also provides opportunities for peer learning through comments and collaborations (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022). Furthermore, the platform's use of subtitles and captions helps students to see the spelling and usage of words in context, which enhances their understanding and retention of new vocabulary (Rama et al., 2023). Overall, these features make TikTok a powerful tool for vocabulary enhancement, combining entertainment with educational value.

However, from the previous researches, it was found that there is still limited research which specifically investigate about is there any statistically significant difference in students' English vocabulary mastery between students who are taught using TikTok and students who are taught using conventional method. Thus, it is necessary to mention that the research which aimed to investigate the difference in students' English vocabulary mastery between students

who are taught using TikTok and students who are taught using conventional method is imminent.

METHOD

The method used in this research was quasi-experimental research design. This method was used which aimed to investigate the statistically significant difference between students' vocabulary mastery who was taught using TikTok and students who were taught using conventional method. This research investigated two variables from two group of samples, the variables were TikTok as independent variable and vocabulary mastery as dependent variable.

The population of this research were tenth grade students majoring in science at SMA Negeri 1 Bangli. The samples were selected using purposive sampling technique. The samples were the classes of MIPA 6 as the experimental group who was taught using TikTok; and MIPA 7 as the control group who was taught using conventional method. These classes were selected based on the results of their previous English exams which showed that both classes have similar English competence.

The instruments used in this research was multiple choice vocabulary test which consisted of 20 questions with 5 options of a, b, c, d and e. The test was used for measuring students' vocabulary mastery, and how many words they could before and after treatment given to the experimental and controlled groups. This study was held in six meeting in each groups: one pre-test meeting, four treatment meetings, and finally one post-test meeting. This was done to control the extraneous variable that might influence the subject. The topics for each meeting were taken from English syllabus of tenth grade students. The data was collected through pre-test, treatment using TikTok in experimental group and using conventional method in control group and post-test. The data were analyzed using independent sample T-test to know the result of statistical difference between students' vocabulary mastery who was taught using TikTok and conventional method.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the researcher conducted the research, the researcher found the result as described in the following table:

Table 1. Experimental Group Participants' Scores

Test	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post Test	34	70	95	81.03	6.603

Descriptive statistics were calculated for both the pretest and posttest results of both the control and experimental groups. For the experimental group' posttest, the mean score was M=81.03 (SD = 6.603). The median score was Mdn=80.00 with a range of 70 to 96.

Table 2. Control Group Participants' Scores

Test	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post Test	34	50	90	73.97	8.771

Meanwhile, as presented in table 2, For the control group' posttest, the mean score was M=73.97 (SD = 8.771). The median score was Mdn=75.00 with a range of 50 to 90.

Before continuing to inferential analysis, a Saphiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normality of the posttest of the experimental and control groups data. The results indicated that both posttest of the experimental group and posttest of the control group data were normally distributed, with $W(34) = .939$, $p = .057$ for experimental group's posttest; and $W(34) = .952$, $p = .143$ for control group's posttest as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Result of Independent Sample T-test

		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Students' Result	PostTest Experimental	.939	34	.057
	PostTest Control	.952	34	.143

After fulfilling the normality assumption, a Levene's test was conducted to assess the homogeneity of variances for the scores across three groups. The test was not significant, $F(66) = 1.684$, $p=.199$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Thus, the homogeneity assumption was fulfilled.

Table 5. The Result of Independent Sample T-test

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
	Based on Mean	1.684	1	66	.199
	Based on Median	1.461	1	66	.231
Students' score	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.461	1	60.273	.231
	Based on trimmed mean	1.538	1	66	.219

Since all the statistical assumptions have been fulfilled, the researcher decided to continue comparing the means of the experimental and control groups using parametric test of T-test. The results of the T-test are presented in table 6.

Table 6. The Result of Independent Sample T-test

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Students' Score	Equal variances assumed	1.684	.199	3.749	66	.000	7.059	1.883	3.299	10.818
	Equal variances not assumed			3.749	61.312	.000	7.059	1.883	3.294	10.824

Based on the statistical calculation of independent T-test from post-test of the participants on the table above, it indicated that there was significant difference between the mean score from the experimental group who was taught using TikTok ($M = 81.03$, $SD = 6.603$) and control group who was taught using conventional method ($M = 73.97$, $SD = 8.771$).

The results of the independent sample T-test, t (66) = 3.749, $p = <.001$ means that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This suggests that there is statistically significant difference of students' English vocabulary mastery between students who were taught using TikTok and students who were taught using conventional method at tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bangli.

The primary objective of this study was to compare the vocabulary mastery of students taught using TikTok with those taught using conventional methods. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the experimental group, which utilized TikTok, and the control group, which employed traditional teaching methods. Specifically, the students in the TikTok group demonstrated significantly higher vocabulary scores compared to their peers in the conventional group.

The results of the independent samples t-test indicated that the use of TikTok as a teaching media positively impacted students' vocabulary acquisition. The significant difference in mean scores suggests that the interactive and engaging nature of TikTok videos may enhance vocabulary learning more effectively than conventional methods.

These findings align with those of Herlisya and Wiratno (2022), who reported improvements in language skills through the use of TikTok. Similarly, Rama et al. (2023) found that TikTok significantly aids in vocabulary development due to its diverse and engaging content. However, our study expands on this by providing empirical evidence of the efficacy of TikTok in a controlled experimental setting, thus adding to the robustness of the existing literature.

Furthermore, we observed that participants in the experimental group genuinely enjoyed learning English through TikTok videos. They did not become easily bored during the learning process, especially when duet videos were played on TikTok. The participants appeared enthusiastic about engaging with the duet videos. These findings are supported by Fahdin (2020), who discovered that short TikTok videos containing English material help students improve their English vocabulary. In his study, students provided positive feedback, noting

that the English content in the videos was easy to understand and helped them retain various vocabulary words, such as verbs, nouns, and other topics (Fahdin, 2020).

Additionally, our results are consistent with those of Rahmawati and Anwar (2022), who found that students had positive attitudes toward learning English through TikTok. Their study indicated a 95% improvement rate, suggesting that TikTok is an effective tool for vocabulary learning. Furthermore, we observed that using TikTok duet videos in teaching vocabulary not only made the lessons enjoyable but also helped participants easily memorize vocabulary, as the videos often included music. This finding aligns with the research by Sinta et al. (2022), who found that students reported that TikTok duet videos helped them easily memorize vocabulary and understand both the meaning and pronunciation. Students also expressed enjoyment in learning through these videos (Sinta et al., 2022).

The implications of this study are significant for educational practices and policy-making. First, the results suggest that integrating social media platforms like TikTok into the curriculum can enhance vocabulary acquisition among students. Educators can leverage the engaging and relatable content on TikTok to make learning more appealing and effective. This could be particularly beneficial in motivating students who are less engaged with traditional learning methods.

Moreover, the study highlights the potential for technology to transform educational practices. As digital literacy becomes increasingly important, incorporating technology into teaching not only improves learning outcomes but also prepares students for a tech-centric world. Policymakers should consider supporting the integration of such innovative tools in educational frameworks to foster an adaptive and modern learning environment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our research indicates that TikTok can be effectively used in teaching English vocabulary. It facilitates easier memorization of vocabulary, keeps students engaged and prevents boredom, and enhances their overall enjoyment of the lessons. Therefore, it is evident that there are significant differences in vocabulary mastery between students taught using TikTok and those who are not.

Despite the promising findings, this study has several limitations. The sample size was relatively small, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the study was conducted over a short period, limiting our understanding of the long-term effects of using TikTok for vocabulary learning. Future research should address these limitations by including larger, more diverse samples and extending the duration of the study to examine the long-term impacts. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of TikTok in enhancing other language skills, such as grammar and pronunciation, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of its educational potential.

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